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BASF deal will be good for tanners, Stahl CEO says



The chief executive of Stahl, Huib van Beijeren, has said he believes his company's proposed acquisition of the leather business of rival chemicals manufacturer BASF will be good news for tanners.

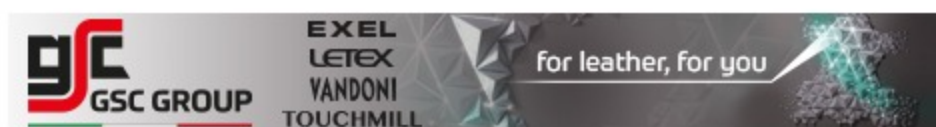
Speaking exclusively to leatherbiz on the opening day of the APLF exhibition in Hong Kong, March 29, Mr van Beijeren said the acquisition will strengthen Stahl's commitment to the leather industry. He said his company has "always been committed" to leather and that its acquisition of Clariant's leather service business unit in 2014 extended that

commitment. "This [the proposed acquisition of BASF's leather business] will be an opportunity to extend it even more," he said.

He explained that, in his opinion, some large companies in the chemicals industry have left the leather industry because they have ceased to be satisfied with the opportunities for growth that leather can offer. "The leather industry is probably too small for them," he said, "so in their minds it's logical to leave leather behind and put their efforts into other sectors. Where the leather industry is going and what challenges it faces are very different questions today than they were 10 or 15 years ago. Clearly, there are big companies that do not see leather as a priority any more, but we do see it as a priority."

Of BASF, with whom Stahl hopes to complete the deal for the acquisition of its leather business unit in the fourth quarter of this year, Mr van Beijeren went on to say that, in his opinion, it was a service-oriented company until 15 or 20 years ago, but that it has been operating more recently "under a different model". Its current set-up is to use distributors and it has reined in earlier efforts to provide technical service and to educate people in the industry. "But BASF has very good products and people," he added, "and a very good reputation for the quality of its products. If we at Stahl can combine that with our very customer-focused and technical services-oriented model, I think we can do a better job together."

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